

## Passive (3)

### A

I was born . . .

We say I was born (*not* I am born):

- I was born in Chicago.
  - Where were you born? (*not* Where are you born?)
- } *simple past*
- but ■ How many babies are born every day? *simple present*

### B

Some verbs can have two objects – for example, **give**:

- We gave the police the information. (= We gave the information to the police.)
- object 1*      *object 2*

So it is possible to make two passive sentences:

- The police were given the information. *or* The information was given to the police.

Other verbs that can have two objects are: **ask offer pay show teach tell**

When we use these verbs in the passive, most often we begin with the person:

- I was offered the job, but I refused it. (= they offered me the job)
- You will be given plenty of time to decide. (= we will give you plenty of time)
- Have you been shown the new machine? (= Has anybody shown you . . . ?)
- The men were paid \$200 to do the work. (= somebody paid the men \$200)

### C

I don't like being . . .

The passive of doing/seeing, etc., is **being done / being seen**, etc. Compare:

*active*: I don't like people **telling** me what to do.

*passive*: I don't like **being told** what to do.

- I remember **being given** a toy drum on my fifth birthday. (= I remember somebody giving me a toy drum)
- Mr. Miller hates **being kept** waiting. (= he hates people keeping him waiting)
- We managed to climb over the wall without **being seen**. (= without anybody seeing us)

### D

Get

Sometimes you can use **get** instead of **be** in the passive:

- There was a fight at the party, but nobody **got hurt**. (= nobody was hurt)
- I don't often **get invited** to parties. (= I'm not often invited)
- I'm surprised Ann **didn't get offered** the job. (= Ann wasn't offered the job)

You can use **get** to say that something happens to somebody or something, especially if this is unplanned or unexpected:

- Our dog **got run over** by a car.

You can use **get** only when things happen or change. For example, you cannot use **get** in these sentences:

- Jill **is liked** by everybody. (*not gets liked* – this is not a “happening”)
- He was a mysterious man. Nothing **was known** about him. (*not got known*)

We use **get** mainly in informal spoken English. You can use **be** in all situations.

# Exercises

41.1 When were they born? Choose five of these people and write a sentence for each.

Beethoven	Galileo	Elvis Presley	1452	1869	1935
Diana, Princess of Wales	Mahatma Gandhi	Leonardo da Vinci	1564	1901	1961
Walt Disney	Martin Luther King, Jr.		1770	1929	

1. *Walt Disney was born in 1901.*
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. And you? I \_\_\_\_\_.

41.2 Write these sentences using the passive, beginning in the way shown.

1. They didn't give me the money. I *wasn't given the money*.
2. They asked me some difficult questions at the interview.  
I \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Jessica's colleagues gave her a present when she retired.  
Jessica \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Nobody told me that Michael was sick.  
I wasn't \_\_\_\_\_.
5. How much will they pay you?  
How much will you \_\_\_\_\_?
6. I think they should have offered John the job.  
I think John \_\_\_\_\_.
7. Has anybody shown you what to do?  
Have you \_\_\_\_\_?

41.3 Complete the sentences using *being* + one of these verbs:

ask attack give invite keep pay

1. Mr. Miller doesn't like *being kept* waiting.
2. They went to the party without \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Most people like \_\_\_\_\_ presents.
4. It's a dangerous city. People won't go out after dark because they are afraid of \_\_\_\_\_.
5. I don't like \_\_\_\_\_ stupid questions.
6. Few people are prepared to work without \_\_\_\_\_.

41.4 Complete the sentences using *get/got* + one of these verbs (in the correct form):

ask break damage hurt pay steal sting stop use

1. There was a fight at the party, but nobody *got hurt*.
2. Ted \_\_\_\_\_ by a bee while he was sitting in the yard.
3. How did that window \_\_\_\_\_?
4. These tennis courts don't \_\_\_\_\_ very often. Not many people want to play.
5. I used to have a bicycle, but it \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Last night I \_\_\_\_\_ by the police while I was driving home.
7. How much did you \_\_\_\_\_ last month?
8. Please pack these things very carefully. I don't want them to \_\_\_\_\_.
9. People always want to know what my job is. I often \_\_\_\_\_ that question.